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ABSTRACT

The University Council for Educational Administration's (UCEA) response to the National Policy Board's agenda is reviewed in this address. Recommendations for action include: reassessment of the organizational mission; initiation of assertive interaction with critics; and collaboration among all professional groups. Examples of the UCEA's actions fulfilling each recommendation are presented. (21 references) (LMI)

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REFORM, REACTION, RENEWAL: UCEA'S RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL POLICY BOARD AGENDA

by

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Next month a year will have passed since the National Policy Board for Educational Administration issued a challenge to those responsible for preparing the next generation of educational leaders. We have been asked to dramatically rethink, reshape, and redesign the essential elements of preservice and inservice preparation programs. At issue is the entire spectrum of programmatic activities and services we commonly associate with the educational experience of prospective school administrators. Recruitment and selection, program content, support for graduate education, placement and follow-up support for graduates are among the concerns raised by those who framed the reform agenda. Scores of reports, news articles, books, studies, not to mention the confetti of legislative proposals from the state capitols compel us to address the leadership crises in our society and particularly in our schools. Nine specific issues were delineated in the Agenda for Reform of the National Policy Board (1989) dealing with the characteristics of the people we prepare, the nature of the programs we design, and how we should go about assessing the quality of the people we prepare, their faculty, and their programs.

Tom Glass, our Division A Program Chair, called me a couple months ago to see if I would inform you on what the University Council of Educational Administration's response has been to the challenge set forth in the National Policy Board's Agenda for Reform. I told him I could do this rather quickly by simply stating after some hand wringing, life threatening gestures, and fierce debate, UCEA adopted some principles corresponding to the National Policy Board's recommendations (UCEA Review, 1990): UCEA recently organized a

few task forces to generate implementation strategies; and UCEA will soon be introducing membership criteria incorporating standards associated with the National Policy Board's recommendations. But this reminds me of an incident a few years ago when my daughter Connie wanted to go outdoors to join her sister Samantha and her playmates but feared they would not accept her. So when the children started to return to the house I said playfully, "Let's hide behind the door and they won't know where we are!" She looked at me quizzically, as only she can, and said, "But Daddy, suppose they don't care?" You see, my Connie was right. Instead of hiding behind the door perhaps we should have been more assertive, and taken a more interactive approach to seek a solution to her problem.

TOWARD THE RENEWAL OF OUR FIELD

The renewal of our field, like any social enterprise, can be realized only if some people care. Apathy, a lack of conviction, or petty posturing for center stage will accomplish nothing. And those who do nothing, change nothing. Clearly, an organization with a self improvement mission like UCEA must become downright assertive if it is to contribute meaningfully to the renewal of our field, and it must become more interactive and collaborative with the larger profession if it is to engage in reform that reaches well beyond the margin of the status quo and outlasts the shortlived reforms of the past.

There are three steps I think UCEA should take in fulfilling its unique mission within the larger context of professional development. As a first step I think both those from within and those from without, who spend any of their precious time pondering

over it, should consider what UCEA's original mission was, what it has become, and what it might become as we enter the 21st century. As a second step I think UCEA should not only be assertive in its response to the National Policy Board's agenda, but it should take an interactive stance with the naysayers and the critics both from within and outside the field of educational administration. And as a final step I think UCEA has to collaborate with all the professional groups, and especially with those concerned with the changing professional role of teachers if it is going to be a viable contributor to the reform movement that will take us into the 21st century.

The critical task is to determine how today's UCEA needs to be different from yesterday's UCEA, regardless of its past or recent successes; to see if UCEA has the capacity to collaborate with the major constituencies of our profession, and to create systems for channeling our collective energies toward our common purpose--that is, to create programs that involve the best and brightest from diverse backgrounds and incorporate well designed, sequentially developed content that is meaningful to practitioners. This will, indeed, require a major shift in what we are currently doing.

REFORM: AN AGENDA IS AN AGENDA

For a moment let me suggest that the reform of educational administration is not a new phenomenon in our field. An analysis of change agendas since the 1950's, moved one researcher to conclude that today's charge is a kind of deja vu. Achilles (1989) in a paper he entitled, "Searching for the olden Fleece: The Epic Struggle Continues," contended that what the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration and the National Policy

Board have done is to "help identify goals and offer the tribal councils wherein to seek unity" (p. 21). Using a report published by UCEA (1969), "Preparing Education Leaders for the Seventies," as a midpoint, Achilles traced reform proposals from pre-CPEA days to the present, a span of nearly three decades. What he found was that the ten component framework established in this 1969 report compared quite closely with prior agendas, as well as those we are addressing today (p. 5). We would have to agree with Achilles that the Golden Fleece is elusive, that throughout the brief history of our field we can point to very few exemplary recruitment and selection programs, or preparation programs that have persisted through time, and that where we have foundered is in our ability to sustain any semblance of a national effort toward fulfilling the ideal of most of the reform agendas of the past or the present. An agenda is an agenda; what follows is what really counts.

For example, many of us do remember those beamish years of the Great Society Era when the flow of federal and foundation dollars provided us with opportunities to experiment, to recruit a new wave of school administrators, to develop change managers, and to be especially attentive to diversity and some of the intractable problems of our society dealing with poverty, education, race, ethnic, and gender issues. Some imply that equity not quality was our primary concern. Others argue it was our only concern. I, as one of those educators who ran their well funded programs with a "go-go" style of enthusiasm, a "devil take the hindmost" attitude, can tell you that quality was a major priority during that brief span of time when we had the resources to provide scholarships and stipends for full

time residencies, paid internships and students representative of different racial, ethnic, gender backgrounds (Scribner, 1971; 1973).

Although this was not a truly nationwide effort, the limited funds available were dispersed, however, at universities in different regions of the country willing to compete for extramural funding and willing to develop model programs that had the potential of making fundamental changes in the nature and quality of both the students and the programs in which they participated. Unfortunately, because of a lack of will on the part of funding sources to address this problem in a systematic way (parenthetically, we spent more on a few warheads for our missiles than we did for our entire ESEA budget), we represented another bandaid approach to leadership development, another example of disjointed incrementalism. And, alas, once the ugly demon from Washington, D.C., known in some quarters as Budgetcutter, swooped down on us, we pretty much went back to business as usual.

Of course, the counter argument that has been pointed out to me, and that I do believe has some merit goes something like this. The federal government never had any intention of sustained funding. The responsibility for the lack of support for students and innovative programs should be placed squarely on the universities (Twombly & Edmeier, 1989). In either case, top-down or bottom-up, sweeping changes in our field have been for naught.

In today's environment, the literature on school reform suggests that the entire educational system may be in for a major overhaul. A recent NSSE Yearbook addresses the changing contexts of families, communities, and schools as it impacts on what

administrators do or ought to be doing in their leadership roles in educational systems (Mitchell & Cunningham, 1990). Moreover, Murphy (1990) provides an excellent overview of thirty two different reform agendas and their varying emphases on strengthening management and leadership skills, particularly of principals. He submits that "Reformers in the area of school administration have become disgruntled with current preparation programs that are: (a) often little more than collections of diverse and poorly integrated classes lacking clear focus and purpose; (b) delivered to prospective administrators with little thought or regard for sequence of skills and knowledge; and (c) provided to students at times and through instructional approaches least conducive to learning" (p. 242). The primary emphasis of the larger reform movement as it relates to educational administration to be directed toward principals, toward the internal operations of schools, the raising of standards, and toward the adoption of a professional school model with an identifiable knowledge base.

That the preparation of school administrators will require fundamental changes is an issue that lies at the very essence of what UCEA was and is supposed to be all about. To provide programs, to share new methods, to create and test new curricula, to work cooperatively with member universities and partnership school districts and to disseminate program innovations and research findings throughout the nation constitute central themes, a set of core activities, a rationale for UCEA's very existence.

THE REFORM AGENDA; UCEA'S INITIAL RESPONSE

What has the University Council of Educational Administration done? What is it doing? What should it be doing? There are those who think UCEA is an elitist organization, and there are those who would probably disassociate themselves from the organization if it were not thought to be elitist. At the close of this past fall's UCEA plenary session meeting, Bob Stout (1990) used one of the few obligatory tasks of the UCEA Presidency, the annual Presidential Address to shed some light on the historic mission of UCEA, he said, "I like the lack of pretension found in the original Articles of Incorporation, and their focus on the mission of self-help in a professional school setting" (p. 5). He concluded by saying, "I would want us to remember that UCEA was not intended to be an exclusive club" (p. 5). And that like those who had the foresight to establish this organization, he implored UCEA's current membership to reassess what business we are in, to recognize the need for change, and get on with doing it.

Clearly, the interest aroused by the National Policy Board's Report, combined with the work of those involved with the Danforth Leadership projects, the work of government supported LEAD programs, the Holmes Group, and the myriad other efforts underway with administrator organizations, school districts, and universities calls for a new vitality in our field, in ourselves, and in our programmatic efforts to provide America's schools with effective leaders. Shortly after the National Policy Board's Convocation of One Hundred was held in Charlottesville, Virginia, David Clark accentuated the need for a new vitality in our field. He called on us

to "Seize the Initiative!" (1989). Clark, who has been a major role player in the reform movement, met with the UCEA Executive Board and the Plenary Session Representatives to encourage the institutions they represent to set the standard for producing effective leaders for the nation's schools.

The first step toward the reassessment of what business UCEA is in took place this past fall when at the annual Plenary Session meeting the nine National Policy Board standards were adopted and membership institutions agreed to "work aggressively and cooperatively" toward developing a knowledge base for our field, toward providing identifiable strategies and plans for recruiting and selecting women and minorities into the field, and toward creating formal working relationships with schools and other educational agencies, as partnership sites for clinical studies, field residencies and practice sensitive research. In addition, commitments were made to attend to other details relating to the intellectual and interpersonal development of students, placement and career advancement, systematizing program experiences, and working with professional associations and other educational agencies in developing, delivering, and evaluating systematic professional development programs for educational leaders.

I believe none of these commitments would have been realized had it not been for the fact that UCEA's Executive Committee had the foresight to ask the plenary session representatives to begin the process on their respective campuses. The results of their effort led to a healthy debate and what I believe to be reasonable modifications of the Policy Board's original recommendations. The

AASA Professor group, meeting at UCEA's annual conference in Phoenix, also endorsed UCEA's version of the National Policy Board's Recommendations. At a subsequent meeting in Washington, D.C., the National Policy Board itself formally reviewed UCEA's version of their earlier work, and on the basis of Scott Thompson's (NCPEA, 1990, p. 3) suggestion, modified the knowledge base recommendation which excluded any mention of technology, and then adopted the nine standards for improving the professional field of educational administration.

UCEA, also, is committed to developing membership criteria that embrace the National Policy Board's nine standards, as well as to organizing implementation task forces to address three critical areas: (a) models and procedures for recruitment and selection, (b) strategies for working in the political arena with state and national interest groups, legislatures, regional organizations, etc., and (c) strategies for collaborating with local school districts and schools. After almost two years of deliberations and working drafts UCEA's Executive Committee will have a proposal for the new membership criteria before the Plenary Session Representatives at next fall's meeting in Pittsburgh. Also, we will seek testimony from our colleagues and others who may wish to participate in hearings at the fall meeting on the nature, direction and substance of the topics around which the task forces have been organized.

RESPONSIBLE CONSIDERATION OF THE NAYSAYERS AND CRITICS

While UCEA busily involves itself in establishing an implementation plan, there remains those who are skeptical; those whose concerns and criticisms will need to be addressed if, indeed,

persisting through time. The danger we face is engaging in another affair with disjointed incrementalism.

I think it is important to share a few examples of these concerns and some of the implications they have for UCEA. Briefly, these comments are based on what I gathered during my attendance at the deliberations of the Committee of 100, the editorials that followed, and what a handful of school administrators and state agency representatives had to say when asked to critique the National Policy Board report (Appendix A). The main point on which they all agreed was that something must be done and we must begin doing it now. But there were predictably mixed reactions on the specifics of what ought to be done. For example, concern over entrance standards, full time residency, the doctoral requirement for entry level positions, the emphasis on a common core of knowledge, and national licensure seemed to preoccupy many of the practicing administrators.

Some believe that until salaries are upgraded, the recruitment and selection goals are unrealistic. Others are fearful that we could establish selection criteria that would exclude the very people we want to recruit. More than a few would place the emphasis on exit criteria rather than relying unduly on the traditional test scores at the front end of the program.

Likewise, there are those who do not foresee massive amounts of funding for full time residencies. And without this, many of those we are eager to bring into educational leadership roles will be reluctant to suffer substantial losses in income and benefits in order to become certified into the profession. Others wonder if it would be

worthwhile to design rigorous programs in conjunction with full time employment. They argue that if work study programs were creatively conceived, participants would immediately appreciate the theory-practice relationship.

Also, one practitioner reacted to the quest to establish and transmit a common core of knowledge with an interesting conclusion. This person suggested that universities may already provide much of the content proposed in the NPB recommendations, albeit in a random format. This individual concluded by asking, "Who would choose to fly with a pilot who only had an awareness of the effect of wind patterns on aircraft?" If there is a common core of knowledge, there must also a common core of skills. Those skills need to be identified, systematically taught, and evaluated to assure that individuals seeking positions in educational administration will be competent, effective professionals. This, surely, is within the purview of UCEA's basic mission and goals for self improvement.

Finally, as mentioned earlier there was intensive discussion over similar issues by the university professors representing their respective universities at UCEA's fall Plenary Session meeting. But let me conclude by directing your attention to the concerns of two professors. In the fall issue of AASA's "The School Administrator," two articles suggest that there is little hope for the renewal of our field. Hawley (1989) suggests the wrong questions were addressed in the report and that those who prepared the report "should have encouraged the design of alternative approaches for preparing school administrators that would be evaluated in terms of their effects on teachers and children" (p. 15). And Drury (1989) asserts, "I predict

teachers and children" (p. 15). And Drury (1989) asserts, "I predict that this report, too, shall pass" (p. 16). He further argued that the obstacles that "thwarted" earlier reforms, such as a lack of consensus on what ought to be done, pressures to maintain the status quo, and the apparent lack of background and inclination of faculty to build bridges to the field, will again come home to haunt us. Thus, on the one hand, we are told by many of the naysayers: "It cannot be done!" or "We need more research to guide us!" or "What we want to do is misguided, anyway!" And on the other hand, no one is saying that what we do is outstanding, that what we do needs no improvement, or that our modus operandi should continue as "business as usual". On the contrary, there are tremendous pressures for change from within and outside our profession. There are hurdles to overcome, but as Gardner (1964) put it sometime ago, "Unlike the jailbird, we don't know that we've been imprisoned until after we've broken out!" (p. 9). Human beings do have a knack for getting trapped in webs of their own creation.

WHAT THEN? SOME PERSONAL PREMONITIONS

Let me finish by offering a few personal premonitions. First, Pat Forsyth (1989) addressed the NCPEA last summer and called for a new era of collaboration between professional organizations. Is it so unthinkable that by the year 2000 that UCEA folded its tent and moved in under a much larger tent including NCPEA, AASA, NAESP, NASSP, and all the other organizations dedicated to the improvement of educational leadership? What would happen if the NPB was the Executive Board for the American School Management Association?

Secondly, imagine if you can that I am addressing you today, on April 16, in the year 2001. And since tomorrow is actually my birthday, I am sensitive to that date for this would pretty much be my final AERA presentation before I assume my new career playing golf fulltime. But, guess what, the 1986 study by McCarthy (pp. 34-35), and her colleagues suggests that well over 50% of us will already have retired! I believe the turnover rate for school administrators in the field will be equally devastating. Will we have, as Catherine Marshall (1989) and Charol Shakeshaft (1989) have challenged us in a recent newsletter of the NPB, the resolve over the next few years as the profession changes to become equal opportunity employers? Would I, as I make this address in the year 2001, be speaking to a quite different audience? And will those holding down the lead teacher positions, superintendencies and the like be reflective of Time Magazine's recent cover story, referred to as "America's Changing Color?" (pp. 28-31).

And lastly, what Professor William Hamilton, director of the Management and Technology Program at the prestigious Wharton School had to say may have some applicability to our own situation in educational administration. In response to the charge that business schools "are still largely geared to turning out theoreticians and number-crunchers" (cited in Seiber, 1983, p. 80). He summed up the whole matter boldly by saying, "One of the greatest solutions to the Japanese threat is to export a number of our MBA programs to Japan" (p. 80). Will we finally have in place by the year 2001 programs in which the link between theory and practice is so well understood and so well demonstrated in our programs that it is a

administration programs are based? Will our university classrooms embrace the workplace, and will the workplace become the most viable classroom?

These are but a few of the questions facing us as we close in on the new millenium. There are many more and there are more significant ones. But as we consider our future, I hope we will be interactive with all our constituent groups. I hope we will be assertive in our search for equity in the profession of educational administration. And I hope we will continue to strive for rigor and relevance as we change our programs to meet the needs of tomorrow's schools. My premonition is that we will.

As we say just north of here in my home State of Maine, "You can raise Heaven and Earth for something you want tomorrow. But you can raise Hell and get it today."

Appendix A

Appendix A

Name	Position
Alarcón, A.G.*	Research Associate, Texas Education Agency (TEA)
Brown, J.E.*	Principal
Cantu, M.M.	Principal
Cárdenas, O.M.*	Division Chief, TEA
Cox, V.A.	Exec. Dir., Private School
Hoke, A.A.	Vice Principal
Johnson. J.F.*	Program Director, TEA
Johnson, L.*	Accreditation, TEA
Johnson, S.	Principal
Kays, W.E.	Principal
Lawrence, S.E.*	Accreditation, TEA
Marten, A.	Technical Assistance Director, TEA
Menefee, P.A.*	Accreditation, TEA
Miars, W.G.	Principal
Moak, L.	Deputy Commissioner, TEA
Neumeyer, C.	Principal
Smith, F.*	Div. of Special Programs, TEA
Villareal, L.*	Consultant, Texas Assn. of School Boards
Yarborough, D.S.	Principal
Zavala, G.	Principal

*Fellows in the Cooperative Superintendent Program

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